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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 6217
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 0591
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 2373
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0231
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 003393

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [RP](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES: DEMARCHE URGING ASEAN LEADERSHIP ON
BURMA

REF: A. STATE 142628

[1](#)B. MANILA 3335 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Paul W. Jones, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Foreign Secretary Romulo enthusiastically endorsed our points on increased ASEAN leadership on Burma -- including the concept of an ASEAN emissary -- in a conversation with Charge October 11 (reftel A). Ambassador will raise the idea of former Philippine President Ramos as a possible ASEAN special envoy for Burma with President Arroyo early next week. The Foreign Secretary emphasized the importance of China's position on Burma, and stated that while Singapore's stance has been satisfactory so far, the importance of the Burma issue must be kept at the forefront of their attention. Romulo said President Arroyo had raised Burma with India's President and Prime Minister, while Romulo had raised it with the Foreign Minister during their visit to India on October 4-6. "The more pressure the better," Romulo said. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Foreign Secretary Romulo outlined that on President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's recent trip to India, she had raised the subject of Burma with the Indian President and Prime Minister, urging greater Indian engagement. Foreign Secretary Romulo struck a similar theme with his Indian

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counterpart. Arroyo and Romulo stressed the need for the immediate release of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the involvement of the NLD party in the process of democratization. The Indians expressed general agreement, but stopped short of endorsing such demands on the Burmese junta, Romulo said.

[1](#)3. (C) After the Charge assured him that the concept of a special high-level ASEAN emissary had UN Special Envoy Gambari's support, Romulo opined that the idea made sense and might help. He averred that "the more pressure, the better," and suggested that the EU might likewise identify a special Burma envoy, while former Nobel laureates might helpfully sign another statement. Romulo indicated that Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs Enrique Manao will travel to the new Burmese capital of Naypyitaw for an ASEAN senior officials meeting late next week, affording an additional opportunity for dialogue on Burma. We will meet Manao before his departure to press our points.

¶4. (C) Romulo underscored that increased Chinese involvement was key to greater progress toward democratization in Burma; Charge responded that ASEAN could help significantly with China and the Burmese regime. Romulo agreed, and expressed his hope that China or Russia would not block any upcoming action by the UNSC.

¶5. (C) Asked about Singapore's leadership within ASEAN, Romulo related that Singapore's Foreign Minister George Yeo had sought Romulo's support for ASEAN's strong statement on Burma in New York. Romulo assessed that while Singapore's support had been strong so far, there was a need to "keep working on them" from now until ASEAN meetings in November.

¶6. (C) Charge and Foreign Secretary agreed to remain in close communication regarding further actions on Burma. Regarding reftel action for Manila relating to former Philippine President Ramos as a possible candidate for ASEAN emissary on Burma, Ambassador will raise the issue directly with President Arroyo early next week.

JONES